

Success in School for Children and Youth in Care

PROVINCIAL PROTOCOL FRAMEWORK

September 10, 2010

We, the Deputy Ministers of the partnering ministries of Alberta Education and Alberta Children and Youth Services, agree to the roles, responsibilities and processes outlined in this Provincial Protocol Framework (PPF) to support school success for children and youth in care.

Signed: [original signed]

Date: September 10,
2010

Keray Henke, Deputy Minister, Alberta Education

Signed: [original signed]

Date: September 10,
2010

**Steve MacDonald, Deputy Minister, Alberta Children
and Youth Services**

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Introduction

Success in School for Children and Youth in Care – Provincial Protocol Framework (PPF) is a joint initiative of Alberta Education (AE) and Alberta Children and Youth Services (ACYS) to support improved school outcomes and high school completion rates for children and youth in provincial government care. The PPF describes the roles and responsibilities of the two ministries in implementing policies and procedures to provide the foundation for collaborative efforts at all levels of their respective systems to achieve this goal. The primary purpose of the PPF is to identify and enable strategies to improve educational outcomes for children and youth in care, and to promote consistency of practice across the province between AE and ACYS staff and their partners, such as mental health, youth justice, or contracted agency workers.

The PPF identifies promising practices within a template for development of regional agreements between Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSA) and the school authorities within their boundaries. Regional agreements allow the CFSA and school authority partners to customize the PPF to their regional and local context. These agreements may also include Delegated First Nation Agencies (DFNA), Band school authorities, and other partners who play a role in supporting school success for children and youth in care. The PPF will be followed in all provincial schools by the CFSA and DFNA staff with voluntary participation in on-reserve schools as agreed upon by First Nation school authorities and their DFNA partners.

The regional agreements may also be expanded or adapted by the partners to include other vulnerable child/youth populations.

Background

Current education data, research and literature in the field, as well as consultation and experience, indicate that children and youth in care are at significant risk of poor educational outcomes compared to the general school population. For more information on education results for children and youth in care in Alberta and a summary of the consultation, research and literature, refer to <http://education.alberta.ca/ppf>

The ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services share responsibility to increase educational success for children and youth in care, and play a significant role in supporting and monitoring the work at the front-line school and CFSA community office level as well as at the school authority and regional CFSA level.

The PPF aligns with the overall direction of both ministries in addressing the needs of the young people we serve. The PPF is consistent with existing expectations and current professional standards of casework practice for CFSA and DFNA staff and other ACYS initiatives such as Outcomes-Based Service Delivery. The procedures and strategies outlined in the PPF reflect evidence-based practice and align with the Government of Alberta's *Setting the Direction Framework* (www.education.alberta.ca/departments/ipr/settingthedirection.aspx). The PPF also aligns with the *Guide to Education and Standards for Special Education, Amended June 2004*. Particularly relevant are the current standards related to involvement of parents and guardians, students and professionals "in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of students' IPPs" (p. 10) and the standards related to initiating working relationships and coordinating services with the CFSAs. The goals of the PPF also fit within the High School Completion Framework (see www.education.alberta.ca/highschoolcompletion)

Sharing Information

The PPF will promote an understanding that the timely sharing of pertinent information is critical to meet the needs of the child or youth in care. While still respecting confidentiality, there is opportunity to share relevant personal information in the best interest of the child or youth in

care, both on an individual and an aggregate level, keeping in mind the relevance of the information to the partners in supporting success in school for the young person in care.

[Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

<http://infosharing.gov.ab.ca/home/publications.cfm>

[Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act](#)

[Role of parents in the education of their children](#)

A Privacy Impact Assessment was conducted to examine the implementation of the Success in School Plan and the activities related to the collection, use and disclosure of personal information to ensure they are respectful of applicable access and privacy legislation. The assessment also ensured that necessary measures are in place to safeguard privacy and confidentiality when sharing personal information to appropriately plan educational supports and programming needs for children and youth in care. As regional agreements are developed, they will be further reviewed to ensure these safeguards are well understood and maintained. As with current practice standards, parties must be diligent with keeping records secure, and follow the legislation, policies and procedures in place within their respective ministries, public bodies or organizations related to the management of records or any medium that involves personal information.

The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* explicitly states that sharing of information with others is expected and appropriate to allow for the day to day care or educational programming for children and youth in care. (CYFE Act: section 126 (1) (a))

The *Standards for Special Education, amended June 2004*, in conjunction with relevant legislative provisions, affirm that school staff can share relevant and necessary information and involve staff from Child and Family Services Authorities in planning for educational supports and programming for students.

Outcome Objectives of the PPF

1. Children and youth in care have a say in decisions that affect them and feel welcomed, valued, accepted, supported and respected in school, during transitions, and while participating with the core team and with other supporting partners.
2. Children and youth in care experience increased success in school as evidenced by lower dropout rates, higher provincial achievement test results, improved age appropriate grade level placements and increased high school completion.
3. Children and youth in care have a Success in School Plan that meets their individual needs.
4. School authorities, CFSA DFNA staff and caregivers work together to ensure that children and youth in care are accepted and supported in school.
5. There are positive and productive working relationships between Education, school authorities and Children and Youth Services staff at all levels: ministry, region/division and local.
6. Caregivers feel supported, included and valued as a part of the core team.
7. A collaborative team approach is employed as evidenced by strong communication, relevant and appropriate information sharing, and collaborative planning among members of the core team, and other identified partners.
8. The Ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services promote policy and practices that support school success for children and youth in care, including provincial protocols that ensure consistency of practice(s) related to joint responsibility and accountability for the students' educational achievement.

Core Values Underlying the PPF

- Children and youth in care must be welcomed, valued, accepted, cared for, supported, and treated with dignity and respect. They should not be stigmatized or labeled.
- Confidentiality must be maintained and the dignity of children and youth in care must be preserved.
- Aboriginal children and youth in care, as well as those from other ethnic groups, should have the cultural supports they need for success in school.
- Children and youth in care should have access to appropriate supports to succeed in school.
- Children and youth in care have the right to be involved in decisions that affect them, as appropriate to their age, developmental status and cognitive ability.
- The needs of the child or youth in care must be central to all planning and plans must be individualized according to each child or youth's unique situation.
- All core team partners are important, valued and respected and share responsibility to support success in school for children and youth in care.

Definition and Scope of Children and Youth in Care

For the purpose of the Provincial Protocol Framework, children and youth in care include:

- all children and youth between the ages of 2.5 and 17 years of age with an in care status as defined by the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (See Appendix E for description of status) and who are eligible for Education programming ECS to Grade 12.
- youth 18 years of age and over who are receiving supports through a Support and Financial Assistance agreement under the CYFE Act and who are eligible for Education funding.
- children and youth in care from out of province who are attending school in Alberta.
- all children and youth in care who attend provincial school authorities: Public, Separate, Private, Charter, Francophone, Educational Programs in Institutional Schools and Private ECS Operators.
- those who are school aged and served by CFSAs or DFNA's in any Alberta school.

Other circumstances:

- **On reserve or Band schools:** CFSA/DFNA's in partnership with their local Band schools are welcome and encouraged to implement the PPF on reserve, on a voluntary basis.
- **For children and youth in Permanency Placement Adoption (PPA),** participation in core teams and continued implementation of Success in School Plans will be the decision of the adoptive parents and the caseworker in consultation with school staff.
- **For youth under an Enhancement Agreement with Youth or a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement,** participation in core teams and continuation of implementation of Success in School Plans will be the decision of the youth and the caseworker in consultation with school staff.

Role of the Ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services

Introduction

The ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services share responsibility for the educational outcomes of children and youth in care. The signatures on the Provincial Protocol Framework (PPF) represent the ministries' agreement to fulfill responsibilities to each other, to the children and youth in care whom they both serve and to the other levels of their respective systems in their work to support school success for children and youth in care.

Ministry Point Person Role

Key to the effectiveness of the PPF is the assignment of a provincial point person role in each ministry to support the implementation of the PPF. (see Appendix L)

AE and ACYS will each delegate ministry level point persons who will:

- oversee ministry actions related to the PPF
- champion effective responses to the educational needs of children and youth in care
- devise mechanisms to track educational outcomes of children and youth in care (e.g., Information Sharing Memorandum of Understanding)
- ensure there are procedures to identify school placements and expedite transfer of student records to facilitate appropriate educational programming
- implement processes to determine the effectiveness of the PPF in facilitating achievement of the identified outcomes
- support school authorities, CFSAs/DFNAs to foster school success for children and youth in care
- communicate with and support the field to identify and address challenges or barriers to implementing the regional agreements and the PPF

Issue Resolution: Systemic or Emergent Issues

Strategies to support school success for children and youth in care may at times be beyond the authority of the front-line staff or be of such magnitude that the CFSA and school authority partners might require assistance from their respective ministries. A point person in each ministry will:

- facilitate collaborative strategies to identify and address systemic or emergent issues
- work together on issues requiring joint efforts to implement the PPF and regional agreements in support of school success for children and youth in care.

Issue resolution processes are intended to help identify positive solutions to challenges faced by those working to support the success of children and youth in care. It is not intended to be an appeal nor a legal process. The regional issue resolution process, as developed by the partners in their regional agreements, will include how the CFSA and school authority point persons will involve the ministry point persons when applicable.

Monitoring Outcomes of PPF Implementation

Methods to monitor educational outcomes and achievements of children and youth in care include the collection of information to determine the impact and effectiveness of the PPF such as:

- Review of completed regional agreements and any subsequent revisions.
- Calculation of education data of children and youth in care as per the 2007 AE/ACYS *Information Sharing Memorandum of Understanding* that identifies high school completion and drop out and returning rates, provincial achievement test results, and age appropriate grade level placement data.
- Collection of aggregated data from the CFSA's, participating DFNA, and school authorities:
 - per cent of children and youth in care with Success in School Plans as reported by CFSA and participating DFNA point persons.
 - number of school authorities and CFSA's with current regional agreements.
- Monitoring of PPF and regional agreement implementation and effectiveness through appropriate AE and ACYS mechanisms. (i.e. Field Services Managers and Directors, CEO meetings and the Council of Alberta School Superintendents meetings)
- Review of challenges reported by school authority and CFSA point persons related to supporting Success in School Plans and implementation of the regional agreements, particularly those that require ministry level attention.

Continuity of Implementation and Continuous Improvement of the Provincial Protocol Framework

Periodic review of the PPF and regional agreements is required to ensure continued alignment with professional practice, ministry direction and ongoing applicability to the needs of all involved, particularly the children and youth in care.

Additionally, it is necessary to develop processes to inform new staff and remind existing staff of the procedures and strategies to be followed.

To foster continuous improvement of the PPF, the ministries will employ the following strategies:

- The two ministries will review the PPF within one year of sign-off and at least every two years thereafter.
- The Ministry of Education will initiate and coordinate the review process with ACYS, which will involve feedback from school authority staff, CFSA/DFNA staff, caregivers, children and youth in care, and other relevant partners through:
 - procedures designed to receive and respond to inquiries, issues or challenges that arise from school authorities, CFSA/DFNAs and other stakeholders related to policies, regulations or practices at the ministry level that result in barriers to supporting school success for children and youth in care.
 - communication from and follow-up with the school authority and CFSA/DFNA point persons related to challenges and effectiveness of the PPF and regional agreements, particularly those requiring ministry action to address.
- Ministry signatories will review and approve any recommended revisions to the PPF.
- Annually, or more frequently as required, the ministry point person will discuss and inform the appropriate ministry staff, superintendents, and CEOs /DFNA Directors about the PPF and regional agreements to promote continuity of implementation.

***Success in School for
Children and Youth in Care***

PROVINCIAL PROTOCOL FRAMEWORK

Regional Agreement

Date: _____

Region # _____ Partners	
(add additional spaces as needed, organization logos may also be added)	
Signing authority: CEO, Superintendent, Director, Executive Director	Organization: Child and Family Service Authority, School Authority, other agency or organization (i.e. Delegated First Nation Agency, group home, etc.)

Review dates: January 2012, January 2014 and every second subsequent year.

Place partner logos in this space, as
appropriate

Introduction

Collaboration among partners leads to effective working relationships and positive outcomes. Joint planning and implementation enhance academic, emotional and social success for children and youth in care, which positively influence their success in school, their living environment and the community. Regional agreements allow the partners to customize the Provincial Protocol Framework to their regional and local context, and together develop procedures to guide front-line staff.

The intent of this regional agreement is to:

- improve school outcomes for children and youth in care
- foster positive working relationships between school, and CFSA/DFNA staff
- use collaborative approaches to build on the strengths of children and youth in care
- encourage broad partnerships across service sectors
- clarify roles, and promote mutual support and shared responsibility

Partners and Signatories

Region #__ CFSA , and the school authorities within the CFSA boundary (see attached map) and other identified partners agree to:

- participate within the regional agreement procedures
- invite and encourage Delegated First Nation Agency (DFNA) Directors and band school authorities to be signing partners, on a voluntary basis, where applicable
- include additional signatories and/or consulting partners and stakeholders where agreed upon by the CFSA CEO and superintendent(s) to meet the needs of children and youth in care (see signatory page for a listing of additional partners to this agreement).

In addition:

- partnering organizations that cross CFSA geographic boundaries are party to all regional agreements within their jurisdiction
- the CFSA will lead the initial development of the regional agreement and subsequent reviews one year after sign off and every two years thereafter, with Ministry support as required.

Description of geographic boundaries of Regional Agreement (attach a regional map or municipal list).

Additional participating partners in development of the Regional Agreement.

Procedures and Operations

The following pages outline regional procedures and operations. The appendices of this document include documents to support effective processes at an organizational and front-line level.

Working Together Structure

The structure that facilitates the implementation of the Provincial Protocol Framework and the regional agreements at the local level includes two critical components:

Core Team

To facilitate a collaborative approach, a core team will be identified specific to the circumstances of the child or youth in care. (see Appendix M) The core team supports and promotes the educational achievement of the child or youth, while respecting the need for dignity and confidentiality.

Composition of the core team:

- appropriate school staff, such as school point person, administrator, classroom teacher(s), counselor
- caseworker,
- caregiver(s)
- child or youth in care, if they are developmentally able
- any other guardian of the child or youth, where appropriate
- other identified partners based on the circumstances of the child or youth and the school/community (ie. cultural advisor, medical specialist, contracted youth worker)

Point Person Role

Key to supporting children and youth in care is for each school authority, CFSA, school, and participating DFNA to identify a point person role to facilitate the implementation of the regional agreement and overall educational success for children and youth in care. Although not every school will have children or youth in care in attendance each year, all schools should have an identified point person in the event a child or youth in care requires registration.

Some roles and responsibilities may be carried out by more than one individual according to the knowledge, skills, professional designation and expertise required, as well as the circumstances of the partners and the child or youth. (See Appendices A and I-K for detailed role descriptions).

School Point Person's Role

The role of the school point person is to:

- act as the primary contact for caseworkers and caregivers regarding children and youth in care at school.
- champion the needs of children and youth in care within that school.
- ensure coordination of core team meetings.
- facilitate development of a Success in School Plan for each child and youth in care.
- monitor the child or youth's plan and educational progress during the school year.

CFSA, participating DFNA and School Authority Point Persons

The role of the designated point person in a CFSA, school authority or participating DFNA is to:

- communicate with each other as necessary to provide authority or agency level support for the implementation of the regional agreement and work collaboratively to address any challenges.
- monitor the overall educational success of children and youth in care.
- monitor the effectiveness of the regional agreement.
- report issues related to challenges with implementing the regional agreement to the ministry point persons, particularly any systemic barriers which impact school success for children and youth in care.

CSFAs may also choose to designate a point person at each office to facilitate positive relationships between CFSA and school staff at a local level.

Ministry Point Person

The role of the ministry point person is to:

- support school authority and CFSA/DFNA partners with implementing the PPF.
- guide ministry actions to promote school success for children and youth in care.
- communicate with the CFSA/DFNA and school authority level point persons on matters relating to the PPF and the regional agreements, where applicable.

Describe the procedures to designate the point person role in each school, school authority, CFSA and participating DFNA.

Describe how information about the identity of the point persons will be accessible for the partners.

Working Together Protocols

See Appendix A for sample handouts for each core team member detailing their responsibilities in each of the following components of the regional agreement.

Registration Procedures

A positive initial experience at a new school sets the stage for future school engagement and success. Prompt registration and placement into appropriate educational programs is critical to school success.

The caseworker, school point person and caregiver work together as a collaborative core team to enroll the child or youth in care within one week into an educational program with the required supports. The following actions support registration in an appropriate educational program:

- The caseworker provides the school with a minimum of one day notice before the child or youth in care attends school.
- The school authority places the student in an appropriate educational program within one week.
- Temporary educational arrangements are jointly made if exceptional circumstances delay school placements beyond one week.
- Partners share relevant and necessary information to facilitate appropriate educational programming.
- Partners outline individual responsibilities, and joint roles and actions that support prompt school registration and attendance.

Caseworker's Role

- Clarify the child, or youth and caregiver's school authority residency status, including any religious affiliation.
- Contact the school authority or school point person at least one day before the child's attendance to give notice of pending registration and provide previous school attendance information, if known.
- Meet with the school point person to register the child, and complete the required school forms, where feasible.
- Provide all relevant and necessary information and documentation to the school point person and caregiver(s), i.e. delegation of authority, copy of the birth certificate, citizenship or immigration papers (see Appendix O).
- Ensure that the child or youth starts school with required clothing, books and supplies, and that fees are paid.
- Work with the school point person to plan a core team meeting within eight weeks of registration in school to develop the child or youth's Success in School Plan.
- If placement in a school is not immediate:
 - work with the school to determine a temporary educational arrangement.
 - collaborate with the caregiver and child or youth in care to provide support while awaiting school placement.

School Point Person's Role

- Obtain the child or youth's education records from the previous school authority. Additional efforts may be required if previous school attendance is uncertain.
- Assist with registration and plan the earliest possible date of school entrance for the child or youth, within one week unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- If needed, work with the school authority point person to determine a temporary educational arrangement for the child or youth until an appropriate school placement is secured.
- Work with the caseworker to plan a core team meeting within eight weeks of registration to develop the Success in School Plan.

Caregiver's Role, with support from caseworker and school staff

- Works with the caseworker and the school point person to facilitate enrollment of the child or youth in care in an appropriate program.
- Prepares the child or youth for school entrance and supports them as they settle into the new school.
- Assists with registration at the school, and becomes familiar with school staff and establishes contact or communication with key teachers.
- As part of the core team, participates in meetings to develop and review the Success in School Plan and celebrate accomplishments of the child or youth in care.
- After enrollment in school, provides the day to day support for the child or youth in care in their educational efforts and assists the child or youth in getting assistance from teachers when needed.

Describe the procedure for partners to work together to facilitate:

- ***registration at school***
- ***obtaining the student's records and required information***
- ***convening of the initial Core Team meeting***
- ***determining temporary arrangements in the event of delayed school admission***
- ***welcoming/orientating the child or youth in care to the school***

Planning for and Supporting School Success

Collaboration leads to improved working relationships and better outcomes for children and youth. Planning and support involves the core team members, and may include other identified partners to address the child or youth's needs, such as mental health professionals, youth justice workers, cultural advisors, or contracted agency staff as determined by the needs of the child or youth in care.

The school point person plans for coordination and facilitation of a minimum of two core team meetings per year for each child and youth in care for the purpose of developing and reviewing the Success in School Plan.

Core team meetings to collaboratively develop and implement a holistic, strength-based and culturally appropriate Success in School Plan for each child and youth in care should occur within eight weeks of registration OR of the child or youth receiving in-care status.

Core team meetings should:

- occur at least twice a year to develop, and review the child or youth's Success in School Plan and celebrate accomplishments of the child or youth in care
- be aligned where possible with existing school report periods and the caseworker responsibility for face-to-face meetings with the child or youth in care and the caregiver, in order to minimize school disruptions and provide for reasonable work days for staff
- be collegial, positive, child and youth-centred, strength-based, outcomes-based and solution-focused, as well as culturally sensitive and holistic in nature
- involve the child or youth in decision-making appropriate to their age, developmental stage and cognitive ability
- result in the collaborative implementation of a plan to meet the needs of the child or youth in care to promote their engagement in the school, home and community

Core Team Responsibilities:

- Identifying the educational needs and the strategies required to support school success for the child or youth in care.
- Defining roles and responsibilities of each core team member in addressing the goals.
- Demonstrating support, care and respect for the child or youth.
- Modeling proactive decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Communicating with each other between meetings as needed.
- Meeting to develop and review the Success in School Plan.
- Determining the need to involve other partners to address the needs of the student.
- Ensuring that youth in care are encouraged to plan for post-secondary studies or engage in workforce preparation (See Appendix P) and are given information regarding the Advancing Futures Bursary program, Registered Education Savings Plans for PGO and PGA status children and youth, and other scholarships where applicable.

Describe the procedure for ongoing planning for success:

- ***Core team meetings for review or emergent issues***
- ***Communication procedures***
- ***Involving the caregiver and any other guardians***
- ***Promotion of Advancing Futures Bursary, Registered Education Savings Plans, and other scholarships where applicable.***

Success in School Plan

A Success in School Plan addresses the identified holistic needs of the child and youth in care, outlines needed services and supports, and identifies key people and their roles. (See Appendices H1 and H2 for sample templates). The Success in School Plan is:

- developed by the core team for each child and youth in care within eight weeks of the child or youth's registration in school, or within eight weeks of a child or youth receiving in-care status.
- reviewed at least once during the school year, and additionally when necessary, to address emergent or changing needs or to facilitate a transition.
- attached to any existing Individual Program Plan (IPP), service plan or inclusive plan but also includes:
 - information to clarify roles and responsibilities of core team members
 - cultural supports as appropriate
 - goals and strategies across multiple domains, with references made to other existing plans as appropriate and to avoid duplication.
- aligned with current *Standards for Special Education, Amended June 2004*, particularly sections 6 (a-d): coordinated services; 7 (b) professional standards; 8 (a-c) parent and guardian involvement in decision-making; and 11 (e-f) individualized program planning, implementation and evaluation. Especially relevant are the standards related to involvement of parents and guardians, students and "other professionals in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of IPPs" (p. 10) and the standards related to initiating collaboration with CFSAs and other community partners in coordinating services (see: <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources.aspx>).
- consistent with the values, principles and recommendations of *Setting the Direction*.
- is intended to:
 - contribute to stability and minimize disruption in placements and at school.
 - enhance, but not replace or duplicate, an IPP, inclusive plan or personalized learning plan.
 - signal any special needs and establish clear outcomes based on identified holistic needs.
 - outline the role of core team members, identify other people in the child or youth's life and their individual roles and shared responsibilities, and acknowledge the vital role of the caregiver along with the other professionals.
 - act as a record of progress and achievement and become part of the student record and the ACYS case plan, and be managed as such.
 - enable partners to communicate and take joint action, based on their knowledge, expertise and experience, to support the child or youth with their learning.
 - include celebrations of successes.
 - promote improved school achievement, help children and youth in care fulfill their potential and support them through educational difficulties.
 - be outcome-based, solution-focused, and build on strengths.
 - outline needed services and supports, including educational and cultural supports, to achieve desired outcomes.
 - involve the child or youth in care in the development, when appropriate.
 - consider future plans for post secondary school or workforce preparation.

NOTE: If a youth over the age of 12 years does not want to be identified as a youth in care, requests privacy, or refuses school point person or core team involvement, the caseworker will complete the Success in School Plan with the youth, and assist and encourage the youth to advocate for their own needs in school. The caseworker will maintain communication with the school point person and the caregiver or other guardians regarding the educational progress of the child or youth. The school will continue to monitor and report progress to the casework and caregiver, as with any other parent or guardian.

Caseworker's role

- Provide the school point person with information that helps identify the child or youth's needs and strengths, when known, to assist with educational programming.
- Authorize access to previous school and clinical records as required.
- Participate in core team meetings, minimum two meetings each school year, and in the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the Success in School Plan.
- Ensure that the holistic needs of the child/youth in care and building on their strengths are the primary considerations in developing the plan.
- Identify and invite participation of other supporting partners, such as cultural advisors or contracted agency staff, as appropriate for the child or youth in care.

School Point Person's role

- Liaise with the previous school division, caseworker, and other appropriate parties (e.g., First Nation, Métis and Inuit liaison, educational specialists) to obtain relevant information to promote the school success for student in care.
- Work with appropriate partners, minimally the core team, to develop the Success in School Plan within eight weeks of the child or youth's commencement in school.
- Arrange for a review of the plan by the core team at least once during the school year.
- Delegate responsibilities to other school staff, when appropriate, for core team meeting preparation and attendance, developing and implementing Success in School Plans, and reporting student achievement to caregivers and caseworkers.

Caregiver's role, with support from caseworker and school staff

- Participate in the development, implementation and review of the Success in School Plan as part of the core team.
- Share information related to the successes and challenges of the child/youth in care.
- Suggest participation of other supporting adults or service providers as appropriate to the circumstances of children and youth in care.
- Help the child/youth in care advocate for their needs.

Child or Youth in Care's role, with support from caseworker and school staff

- Participates according to their age, developmental level and cognitive capabilities.
- Shares hopes, dreams and desires to shape the focus of their Success in School Plan.

- *Describe the procedure for planning for success:*
- *Development of the Success in School Plan (including cultural supports, strategies and roles for implementing the plans, including the child/youth's wishes, incorporating parental input)*
- *Ensuring cultural responsiveness and holistic in nature*
- *Plans for review*

Transition Planning

Planning occurs for children and youth in care to reside in permanent, long term placements whenever possible. However, children and youth in care may undergo placement and school transitions for various reasons. Some school transitions are normal and positive, such as from grade to grade and into post-secondary programs or the workforce on completion of school. Research evidence suggests that placement moves resulting in school transitions impact on long-term educational outcomes.

Placement moves should be avoided or minimized wherever possible. When moves must occur, careful planning and timing of transitions allow students to maintain educational continuity, feel accepted, valued, and safe, and also preserves positive team relationships. Transitions will be accomplished in part by:

- Notification to the core team of pending transitions (i.e.. changes to in care status, or placement changes) well in advance when possible, particularly those involving school moves.
- Consideration of the educational needs of the child or youth in care, with joint efforts to maintain their school and community involvement, including allowing the child or youth to finish the semester or term in their current school, or wait for another natural break, even if interim transportation arrangements are required.
- Transition planning by the core team with the receiving parties for a smooth and prompt transfer of information before the move, except in emergency situations.
- Involvement of on-reserve resources, organizations, facilities, or family and appropriate band school, and DFNA personnel, when applicable.
- Involvement of other community resources to support transition to the workforce or to post secondary programs, such as the Employment and Immigration program: Youth Connections. (See Appendix P)
- Provision of opportunities for appropriate farewells, celebrations and closure for the child or youth.

- ***Describe the procedure to manage child/youth transitions including:***
- ***Notification of pending moves***
- ***Information transfer (relevant, secure, timely)***
- ***Maintaining school placements until natural breaks***

Cross-Regional Planning

The regional partners agree to support processes that facilitate working relationships when the partners are in different regions. Strategies to support cross-regional planning include:

- Following the regional agreement in effect where the school is located, regardless of where the caseworker, child or youth is from.
- Facilitating transition and case conference meetings via video or teleconference when face to face meetings are not possible.
- Availability of the applicable regional agreement from the CFSA, both electronically on their website and in hard copy.
- Supporting inclusion of on-reserve DFNA and/or Band school personnel in the planning where appropriate.
- The caseworker informing the regional CFSA or participating DFNA point person, as a courtesy, that a cross-regional placement has been made, as indicated in cross-regional protocols.
- The CFSA or participating DFNA point person helping the school authority partners communicate with other CSFAs when necessary to facilitate cross-regional planning.
- Partners adhering to all other existing cross-regional and interprovincial policies.

Describe how the partners will work together to facilitate cross regional planning for children and youth in care:

Celebrating Success

Encouragement and celebration play an important role in educational success for all children and youth but are especially important for those in care. Schools typically plan for and acknowledge successes, accomplishments and milestones, including test achievements, report cards, projects, grade completion, graduation and extracurricular or cultural activities. Caseworkers and caregivers need to be aware of and involved in the celebrations of success as identified by the school and/or the child or youth in care as much as possible.

Acknowledgement of Accomplishments

- The school point person ensures the core team is notified about school accomplishments so that the child or youth's successes are appropriately recognized.
- CFSAs and participating DFNAs recognize and celebrate the special significance and accomplishment of high school completion.
- Celebrations for Aboriginal children and youth, and those of other cultures, include cultural considerations and/or requests from the children and youth.
- The caseworker and/or caregiver should attend school events typically intended for parents and significant family members, when possible.
- The caseworker and/or caregiver assist the child or youth in care with sharing personal accomplishments with school staff, when appropriate.

Describe the procedures to celebrate successes:

- ***Milestones:***
- ***High School completion:***
- ***Cultural considerations:***

Student Dropout, Suspension or Expulsion from School

Research and anecdotal experience identify that children and youth in care are more likely than other students to miss school due to suspensions, delays in school placements, expulsions and refusal or reluctance to attend. Absenteeism is often a precursor to students leaving school, so attendance rates deserve special attention. Children and youth in care benefit from adult support to maintain regular school attendance.

The regional partners acknowledge that the decision to suspend or expel students rests with the school authority and must be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the *School Act*. (See *Appendix F*) Expulsion is a process initiated by the school but involves a rigorous procedure, including a hearing by the school board. Partners need to understand the procedures and their role in the process. In some instances, children and youth in care and their caregivers may believe that they have been expelled from school when, in fact, the process for official expulsion has not occurred.

Given the importance of consistent attendance, the regional partners agree to:

- implement processes to support educators, caseworkers and caregivers in promoting regular attendance in school and minimizing disruptions in school programming.
- encourage the involvement of the core team in identification of alternatives or interventions if there are signs the child or youth in care is at risk of being suspended, expelled or of dropping out of school.

In Minimizing Disruptions to School Attendance:

- The core team determines strategies to keep children and youth in care in school, and to identify students at risk of leaving school, in order to take appropriate action.
- The core team seeks alternatives to suspension or expulsion.
- The school point person notifies the core team when a decision for suspension or expulsion is pending so the team can work together toward resolution of the situation.
- Caregivers and caseworkers attend readmission meetings or expulsion hearings as required.
- In the case of student dropout or extended absences, the core team helps the child or youth in care to return to school, including referral to the Attendance Board as appropriate.

Describe the procedures to minimize disruption in school attendance:

- ***Suspensions:***
- ***Expulsions:***
- ***Attendance issues:***
- ***How partners will work together to support the return to school of a child/youth in care following extended absences, suspension, expulsion or dropout:***

Concluding In-care Status

A child or youth's in-care status may end for a number of reasons, including the youth turning 18, the child or youth returning to the care of a parent or private guardian, or being adopted. Determination to conclude in-care status of children and youth is the purview of the caseworker as directed by the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act*.

The partners agree that when in-care status is ending, the core team:

- is informed by the caseworker as soon as possible when the decision is made or pending.
- discusses how to support future educational success for the child or youth, including transition planning as needed (see transition planning section).
- continues with the child or youth's Success in School Plan to the end of the school year as appropriate.
- supports youth in care who turn 18 to complete high school, and provides information regarding the Advancing Futures Bursary program, the Registered Education Saving Plan (where application has been made for youth who are subjects of PGOs and PGAs), or other sources of scholarships.
- uses other community resources to facilitate transition to the workforce where appropriate (*See Appendix P*).

When a child is adopted, the caseworker and appropriate school staff can discuss with the adoptive family the option to continue with the Success in School Plan to the end of the school year or other natural transition.

Describe the procedure for partners to work together when in-care status changes:

- ***supporting youth turning 18 years of age to complete high school***
- ***supporting the child or youth and family in cases of adoption***
- ***supporting the child or youth returning to their family***
- ***supporting the young person into the workforce***

Monitoring and Reporting Outcomes of PPF Implementation

As with all students, monitoring educational outcomes and achievements of children and youth in care will be ongoing. The effectiveness of the PPF and regional agreement in supporting children and youth in care for school success must also be monitored.

To this end, the partners support the following actions:

- Schools monitor and report student progress to the caregivers and caseworkers as with any parent, through:
 - report cards, attendance, course completion and provincial achievement test (PAT) results shared with caregivers and caseworkers as the parents/guardians.
 - Success in School Plan progress review(s).
 - anecdotal evidence reported to the school point person and the casework supervisors from teachers, coaches, caseworkers, caregivers, etc., via current formal and informal reporting mechanism.
 - the classroom teacher communicating when additional intervention may be required or when noteworthy successes should be celebrated.
 - providing achievement information, monitoring for signs of struggle necessitating adjustments to the Success in School Plan and ensuring that the caseworker, and caregiver are informed and involved.
- The CFSA, participating DFNA and school authority point persons collect information from the local schools and CFSA or DFNA offices about the completion of Success in School plans and implementation of the regional agreement. The following strategies may be employed:
 - Based on what the school authority determines to be appropriate and manageable, the school authority point person may collect achievement information from the schools related to children or youth in care to determine the success of each cohort. This data may include PAT results, grade level placement, course completion, attendance rates, number of suspension or expulsions or any other applicable data.
 - The CFSA or participating DFNA point person may collect reports related to the number or percentage of Success in School Plans completed from each office. Success in School Plans will become one aspect of regular file auditing and monitoring.
 - The CFSA or participating DFNA point person may monitor the effectiveness of individual Success in School Plans and achievements of children and youth in care in the region based on reports from the caseworkers and aggregated regional education data.
 - Results may be reported through the annual reporting processes within the respective ministries.

Describe how the child or youth's success in school outcomes will be monitored and reported:

- ***At the school level***
- ***At the school district level***
- ***At the CFSA level***

Issue Resolution

From time to time when attempting to implement strategies to support school success for children and youth in care, the core team may need to request assistance from a higher decision-making level within the school authority, CFSA or participating DFNA. The agreed-upon issue resolution procedure is intended to help identify positive solutions but is not intended as an appeal process, nor is it intended to have any legal standing. The school authority and CFSA or participating DFNA point persons should report to the Ministry point persons any re-occurring issues, challenges or barriers that may indicate a need for Ministry review of current policies.

An issue resolution process will assist in dealing with:

- issues and challenges within the context of the regional agreement that impact the success of children and youth in care.
- extraordinary circumstances/requests/Success in School Plan needs that fall beyond the jurisdictional authority of front line staff.

Partners should include processes whereby:

- A written issue resolution process is available to all partners, identifying levels of authority, timelines, and persons involved.
- Issues are submitted in writing and without delay.
- Each party is provided an opportunity to discuss their issue in person.
- There is Aboriginal representation to support the child or youth, for decisions involving Aboriginal children.
- Resolution strategies are communicated in writing in a timely fashion.

Describe the process and timelines for issue resolution. Include:

- ***roles and responsibilities,***
- ***timing to promote responsiveness,***
- ***use of Aboriginal supports or representation as appropriate,***
- ***strategies to ensure voices are heard and considered in solutions.***

Continuity of Implementation and Continuous Improvement of the Regional Agreement

In recognition of the evolving context of front-line work and the demographic variability of the young people jointly served, periodic review of the regional agreements and the PPF is required to ensure continued alignment with professional practice, ministry direction and ongoing applicability to the needs of all involved, particularly the children and youth in care. To accomplish this:

- The CFSA will initiate and coordinate a review process within one year of initial approval and every two years thereafter, by the end of the calendar year, or more frequently as agreed upon by the partners and signatories.
- CFSA and school authority point persons will report successes, challenges and outcomes related to implementation of the PPF and their collaborative efforts to support educational success for children and youth in care to the ministry point persons, with special attention to those requiring ministry level intervention or review to resolve or amend.
- CFSA and school authority point persons may report any aggregated education results received from the Ministries in their annual reports or other existing reporting mechanisms as they determine to be appropriate. The regional partners may decide together to monitor and report on educational results with a view to reporting their success and that of children and youth in care.
- It is important to develop processes to inform new staff and remind existing staff of the procedures and strategies to facilitate ongoing, consistent implementation of the PPF and regional agreements.

Actions for Continuity and Continuous Improvement:

- At least annually, the CFSA/DFNA and school authority point persons review the responsibilities as outlined in the PPF and regional agreements with school principals, CFSA managers and supervisors, DFNA directors and other key senior staff. (Appendices I, J, K)
- At the beginning of each school year, the school point person reviews the regional agreement and discusses with school staff their responsibilities as described in the regional agreement. (Appendix A)
- At the end of August of each year, casework supervisors review the regional agreement and discuss with caseworkers their responsibilities as described in the regional agreement. (Appendix A)
- The school point persons and caseworkers report successes and challenges with implementing the regional agreement at the local level to the school authority or CFSA and participating DFNA point person with a view to continuous improvement of their collaborative efforts on behalf of children and youth in care.
- The CFSA and participating DFNA and school authority point persons report issues to the Ministries related to implementation of the PPF, regional agreements and their collaborative efforts to support educational success for children and youth in care.

Describe the procedure for partners to work together to foster ongoing improvement.

Describe how the PPF Regional Agreement will be:

- ***Monitored and evaluated***
- ***Reviewed and revised***
- ***Shared with key staff***